THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

PoW lodged in Kot Lakhpat Jail

*248. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (Durru): Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have refused to accept 51 PoW, lodged in Kot Lakhpat Jail in Pakistan, 32 of whom have been declared as internees after completing their jail terms awarded by various Pakistani courts;

(b) if so, whether Government have also refused to accept ashes of 21 cremated Indian Prisoners of War lying in the Kot Lakhpat Jail; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Pakistan has not acknowledged the presence of any Indian PoW in its custody.

Handing over of NH-52 to BRO

*249. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has been decided to hand over National Highway-52 to the Border Roads Organisation;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor, the date of decision and actual execution;

(c) the details of the outstanding liabilities to the contractors and the category-wise strength and probable fate of the employees in the light of the said decision, working under Assam PWD for National Highway-52;

(d) the details of the improvement and repair plan, including target set for conversion into four lane; and

(c) the date of allocation and implementation status of bridge at Jaladia Suti by BRO?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. NH-52 in Assam has been entrusted to Border Roads Organisation (BRO) *vide* Government of India Notification dated 16.8.2001. The State PWD, however, has not yet handed over the National Highway to BRO. The decision to entrust the road to BRO was taken as the State Government was not able to utilize the allocation of funds for maintenance and development of National Highway effectively.

(c) There are 22 ongoing improvement works on NH-52. The total sanctioned cost of these works is Rs. 38.12 crore and an expenditure of Rs. 11.70 crore has been incurred upto September, 2001. Some of the works are going on for last 6 to 7 years. The present outstanding liabilities of Plan works to the contractors is Rs. 3.45 crore.

NH works are executed by the State PWD on agency basis. The record of State PWD employees is not maintained by the Ministry. Fate of the employees is to be decided by Government of Assam.

(d) Four laning of NH-52 is not envisaged at present. However, the BRO has been advised to prepare plan for improvement of the NH.

The development and maintenance of National Highway is a continuing process and it is difficult to indicate the date for completion of development.

(e) Construction of Jalakia Suti bridge was sanctioned in November, 1998. The progress upto October, 2001 is 56.48%. The work is likely to be completed by March, 2002.

Rise in unemployment

*250. SHRI K. B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Planning Commission has admitted rise in unemployment after the economic reforms were launched;